

# UCSB Edible Campus Program: Student Farm

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### Introduction

Many university students consistently face challenges in obtaining nutritious food. Nationally, it is well documented that many students at universities are defined as food insecure. Current UCSB data has not been released yet, but comprehensive studies around the country show that food insecurity is a major problem. For example, a study done by the City University of New York (CUNY) found that 39.2% of its undergraduates, about 2 in 5 students, stated they experienced food insecurity in the past 12 months. This number is consistent with findings across the nation. (CUNY) Food insecurity often hinders student's ability to perform to their fullest capacity academically, and amplifies traditional college stressors.

In Isla Vista, the densely populated primarily student town adjacent to UCSB, students can face challenges in obtaining food that is nutritious and sustainable. This problem is exacerbated by a lack of transportation, as many students do not have cars. There are only a few grocery stores, which are more expensive compared to grocery stores in the adjacent cities of Goleta and Santa Barbara. Eateries often do not have many healthy options, and thus student's immediate food choices are typically unhealthy items at high prices, which can contribute to food insecurity.

The UCSB Edible Campus Program seeks to address student food insecurity through the creation of a "decentralized" farm, and by transforming underutilized spaces into areas of food production for the Associated Students Food Bank. We aim to grow up to 25,000 pounds of fresh produce a year to supplement the shelf-stable pantry items, such as beans, rice, and canned foods, available in the Associated Students Food Bank.



### Project Goals

The primary goal of the student farm is productivity: we aim to grow a significant amount of fresh produce for the Associated Students Food Bank.

We also hope to utilize the farm as a living lab, opening up the space as a classroom. We have been in contact with several faculty members from various disciplines, such as Religious Studies and Soil Science, who have expressed interest in holding future classes at the farm.

Through a partnership with the Orfalea Children's Center and the Johnson Ohana Charitable Foundation, we will be bringing classrooms of pre-K children out to the farm on weekly field trips, in order to offer hands-on, play-based garden education.

### Materials and Methods

The Edible Campus program is a coalition effort, supported by the following partners:

- Associated Students Department of Public Worms, UCSB's student run composting program which is supported by a student lock-in fee, will be providing the daily maintenance for the farm.
- Associated Students Food Bank
- UCSB Sustainability
- Volunteer coalition members who have helped shape ideas for farm design and layout

We have sought input and advice from the following campus entities in our operations guidelines:

- Integrated Pest Management
- Environmental Health and Safety
- Design Construction Services (DCS)

Furthermore, we have reached out to other UC campuses with similar community garden and farm projects, to compile a set of best practices and food safety guidelines:

- UC Davis Student Farm
- UCLA Gleaning Program, a collaboration with the non-profit Food Forward and the student group Swipe Out Hunger
- We have reached out to the UC Santa Cruz farm; they are updating their food safety guidelines in accordance to the 2016 Food Safety Modernization Act.



### Results and Outcomes

Pending approval of a final location for the farm, we are working with a local landscape architect to refine our original farm design and layout.

We have compiled a comprehensive Operations Guide for the student farm based on feedback and approval from entities such as Environmental Health and Safety, Campus Design and Construction Services, and Integrated Pest Management.

Key components of the operations guide include:

- Approved produce list
- Record-keeping guidelines
- Pest Management guidelines
- Food Safety guidelines, from harvest to distribution

For the 2016-17 academic year, we have hired a graduate student intern to focus on curriculum building, and an undergraduate student intern to work on program coordination.

### Conclusions



The Edible Campus Program offers an innovative way to reimagine campus food security efforts. The student farm seeks to center maximum productivity levels as a key goal, in addition to educational programming. We hope to engage students as active stewards of their local food system, and highlight the importance of food security in the college environment.



### Acknowledgements

Environmental Health and Safety  
Design Construction Services (DCS)

